United Nations ST/SGB/1999/15

# Secretariat

13 October 1999

## Secretary-General's Bulletin

## Organizational Competencies for the Future

In "Building the Future",[1] I stressed that our greatest strength — and the key to our success as an Organization — was the quality of our people. As part of my overall reform programme, I have been seeking to capitalize on this strength by creating an organizational environment that allows all staff to contribute to their maximum potential. I am committed to creating an organizational culture that is responsive and results-oriented, that rewards creativity and innovation and promotes continuous learning, high performance and managerial excellence.

Experience in other organizations has shown that in order to create a new culture and build human resources capacity for the future, it is important to define organizational core competencies — the combination of skills, attributes and behaviours which are essential for all staff — as well as the additional managerial competencies required by all those who manage others. Once organizational competencies have been defined, they can be used as a base upon which to build and strengthen other human resources systems such as recruitment, placement, development and performance appraisal.

Accordingly, as a key element in my human resources strategy, a project has been undertaken to define core and managerial competencies for the United Nations Secretariat. In defining these competencies, a participatory process was used taking into account the diversity of functions, the multicultural nature of our staff and the range of geographical locations of our Organization. As part of the process, interviews were conducted with the Deputy Secretary-General and 24 Under-Secretaries-General and Assistant Secretaries-General who head departments and offices throughout the Secretariat. Information drawn from the interviews on the Organization's environment and future challenges provided an overall context for the work of 17 focus groups comprising a cross-section of staff at all levels from different departments at six duty stations. The focus groups participated in a day-long process of examining the Organization's environment, work and stakeholders and coming to a consensus on the most important competencies for all staff, as well as those for managers. Data from the interviews and focus groups were used to develop a competency model with three core values, eight core competencies and six managerial competencies, as follows:

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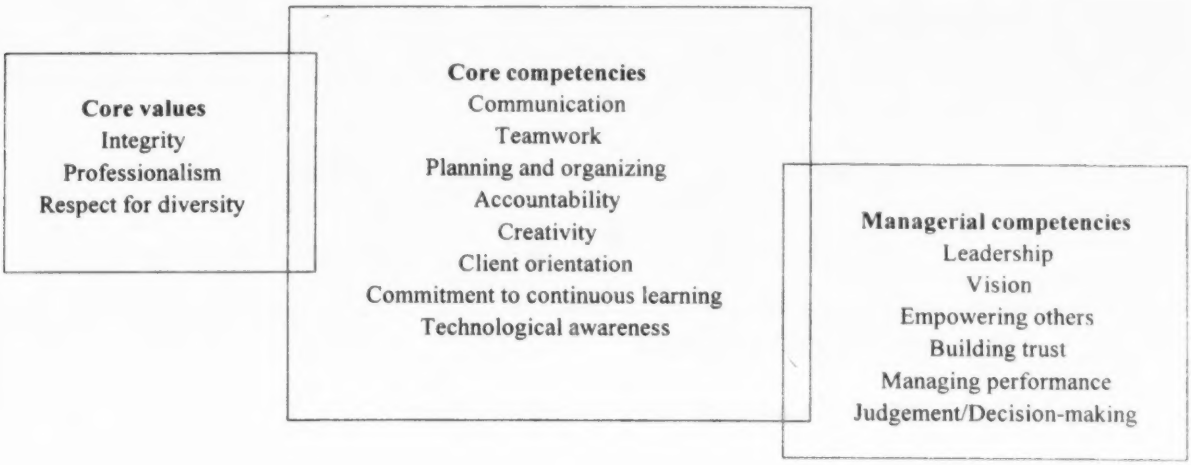


The model of core values and core and managerial competencies has been shared with the Steering Committee on Reform and the Staff-Management Coordination Committee, which noted that competencies could provide the "glue" to link human resources systems together in an integrated way. Clearly, the value of a competency model will come from its application and integration into other aspects of human resources management. This will be a gradual process.

As a first step, all staff will receive a more detailed model of the competencies, which will include behavioural indicators — descriptions of observable actions or behaviours that exemplify the competency or value in practice. Staff development programmes will be aligned with the competencies, and staff will be informed of the means by which they may acquire these competencies. Then, together we will begin developing and strengthening competencies and linking them with other human resources management systems.

It is my hope that the competencies will provide us with a common language for talking, in concrete terms, about high performance and managerial excellence. I believe that a shared view of the standards we are striving to achieve will assist us in our continuing efforts to prepare the Organization to meet the challenges of the twenty-first century.

(*Signed*) Kofi A. **Annan**
Secretary-General

*Notes*

[1] ST/SGB/1998/6.